Message Text

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UNCLAS ISLAMABAD 5279

E.O. 11652: N/A TAGS: PFOR, AF, PK

SUBJ: PRESIDENT DAOUD "BUSINESS TIMES" INTERVIEW

- 1. MAY 22ND PAK TIMES CARRIED FRONT PAGE STORY CONTAINING HIGHLIGHTS OF INTERVIEW OF AFGHAN PRESIDENT DAOUD WITH THE EDITOR OF LONDON, "BUSINESS TIMES". DAOUD REPORTEDLY SAID THAT UNTIL UNDERSTANDING IS REACHED BETWEEN THE GOP AND DETAINED LEADERS OF NAP THE "POLITICAL ISSUE" BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WILL REMAIN UNRESOLVED.
- 2. THE PRESIDENT IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S VIEWPOINT ON THE POLITICAL ISSUE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AS A RESULT OF DAOUD'S TALKS WITH BHUTTO IN KABUL AND ISLAMABAD. DAOUD SAID THAT TALKS WERE HELD IN ATMOSPHERE OF FRIENDSHIP AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT ONE DAY ISSUE WOULD BE RESOLVED PEACEFULLY, HONORABLY, AND JUSTLY. ASKED ABOUT A POSSIBLE NEXT ROUND OF TALKS BETWEEN PAK AND AFGHAN LEADERS, DAOUD SAID THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT AT PRESENT TIME TO DETERMINE WHEN NEW TALKS WOULD BE HELD, AND IN ONLY UNCLASSIFIED

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REFERENCE TO PAK INTERNAL SITUATION CONTAINED IN ARTICLE, DAOUD ADDED THAT "AN UNFORTUNATE SITUATION" HAD DEVELOPED IN PAKISTAN AND THAT IT WAS FOR PAKISTAN TO TAKE INITIATIVE FOR NEXT ROUND OF TALKS.

3. WHEN ASKED WHAT SHOULD BE INITIATIVE FROM PAK SIDE TO GET TALKS GOING THE PRESIDENT ANSWERED THAT IT WAS NOT

POSSIBLE TO TAKE ANY PRACTICAL STEPS TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE UNTIL AN UNDERSTANDING WAS REACHED BETWEEN THE GOP AND THE DETAINED LEADERS OF NAP. DAOUD AGREED WITH THE INTERVIEWER THAT THE RELEASE OF WALI KHAN AND OTHERS WOULD BE A "GOOD STEP" IN THE DIRECTION OF AN UNDERSTANDING BUT ADDED THAT THE ARREST AND RELEASE OF THE NAP LEADERS WAS NOT THE BASIS OF THE POLITICAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, RATHER IT WAS THE OUESTION OF THE "JUST RIGHTS" OF THE PAKHTOONS AND BALUCHIS. ON A SUGGESTION WHETHER PAKISTAN SHOULD HOLD A REFERENDUM IN THE NWFP AND BALUCHISTAN TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE PEOPLE OF THE TWO PROVINCES WANTED TO STAY WITH PAKISTAN OR JOIN AFGHANISTAN, PRESIDENT DAOUD EQUIVOCATED AND SAID THAT THEY SHOULD BE AFFORDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO DECIDE WHAT THEY WANT AND DETERMINE THEIR OWN ASPIRATIONS. DAOUD SAID AFGHANISTAN WAS SUPPORTING THEM AND THAT THEY SHOULD PUT FORTH THEIR DEMANDS AS THEY WISH. CONSTABLE

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